

The Waters of Strife

Source Sheet by Joshua Jacobs

Numbers 20:10

Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation in front of the rock; and he said to them, "Listen, you rebels, shall we get water for you out of this rock?"

במדבר כ':י

וַיִּקְהֲלוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת־הַקְּהָל
אֶל־פְּנֵי הַסֵּלַע וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם שְׁמְעוּ־נָא
הַמְּרִים הַמִּן־הַסֵּלַע הַזֶּה נוֹצֵי־א לָכֶם
מַיִם:

Numbers 20:11

And Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod. Out came copious water, and the community and their beasts drank.

במדבר כ':יא

וַיָּרֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּךְ אֶת־הַסֵּלַע
בְּמַטְּהוּ פַעַמַיִם וַיֵּצְאוּ מַיִם רַבִּים
וַתִּשְׁתְּ הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם: {ס}

"...and he struck the rock with his rod twice" (Numbers 20:11).

They tell a story about Rabbi Yisrael from Ruzhin (Ukraine). He saw one of his sons become angry with a certain Hasid. When the son saw that his father listened and was quiet, he became even more angry with the Hasid. The Ruzhiner finally quieted his son and said to him: This is like Moses Rabbeinu who struck the rock twice and it was considered a sin, because it's okay to lose your temper once and become angry, but if a person returns to their anger, behold, this is a sign of an angry person, and anger is a disgusting trait.

The sages said (Berachot 7a), "God is angry everyday, but to what extent? A moment, as it is said 'God's anger lasts a moment'" (Psalms 30:6). From here we learn that one is not permitted to remain in anger for more than a moment, like God's anger. And Moses, since he struck the rock twice - it was revealed that he stood in his anger for longer than the appropriate measure, and was therefore punished.

Shabbat 105b:8

Wasn't it taught in a *baraita* that **Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says in the name of Hilfa bar Agra, who said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Nuri: One who rends his garments in his anger, or who breaks his vessels in his anger, or who scatters his money in his anger, should be like an idol worshipper in your eyes, as that is the craft of the evil inclination. Today it tells him do this, and tomorrow it tells him do that, until eventually, when he no longer controls himself, it tells him worship idols and he goes and worships idols. Rabbi Avin said: What verse alludes to this? "There shall not be a strange god within you, and you shall not bow to a foreign god" (Psalms 81:10). What is the strange god that is within a person's body? Say that it is the evil inclination.** One may not rend his garments in anger, because in doing so he is deriving pleasure from satisfying the evil inclination.

שבת ק"ה ב:ח'

וְהַתְּנִיָּא, רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן אֶלְעָזָר אוֹמֵר
מִשּׁוֹם חִילְפָא בַר אֲגָרָא שְׁאָמַר
מִשּׁוֹם רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בֶּן נוּרִי: הַמְקַרֵּעַ
בְּגָדָיו בַּחֲמָתוֹ, וְהַמְשִׁבֵּר כְּלָיו
בַּחֲמָתוֹ, וְהַמְפִּיז מְעוֹתָיו בַּחֲמָתוֹ,
יְהֵא בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּעוֹבֵד עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה.
שְׁכָּה אוֹמְנוֹתוֹ שֶׁל יֵצֵר הָרָע: הַיּוֹם
אוֹמֵר לוֹ עֲשֵׂה כָּהּ, וּלְמָחָר אוֹמֵר לוֹ
עֲשֵׂה כָּהּ, עַד שְׁאוֹמֵר לוֹ עֲבוֹד
עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה וְהוֹלֵךְ וְעוֹבֵד. אָמַר רַבִּי
אֲבִין: מַאי קָרְאָה — "לֹא יִהְיֶה כָּהּ
אֵל זָר וְלֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל גֵּכָר",
אֵיזְהוּ אֵל זָר שֵׁישׁ בְּגוֹפּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם?
הוּא אוֹמֵר, זֶה יֵצֵר הָרָע.

Numbers 20:2

The community was without water,
and they joined against Moses and
Aaron.

במדבר כ:ב'

וְלֹא־הָיָה מַיִם לְעֵדָה וַיִּקְהָלוּ
עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן:

Rashi on Numbers 20:2:1

ולא היה מים לעדה AND THERE WAS
NO WATER FOR THE
CONGREGATION — Since this
statement follows immediately after
the mention of Miriam's death, we
may learn from it that during the
entire forty years they had the "well"
through Miriam's merit (Taanit 9a).

רש"י על במדבר כ:ב:א'

ולא היה מים לעדה. מִכָּאן שְׁכָל
אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה הָיָה לָהֶם הַבְּיָר
בְּזָכוֹת מִרְיָם (תענית ט')